The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1575 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 1941 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 31, NO. 24

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Hitler calls America a gangster nation. The Scripps-Howard papers call the American Federation of Labor a gangster organization. Hitler wishes to destroy democracy. The Scripps-Howard papers want to destroy organized labor. No wonder they use the same methods.

It is just as true for Hitler to say that America is a gangster nation as it is for the Scripps-Howard papers to say that the American Federation of Labor is a gangster organization.

Certainly there have been gangsters and criminals in the United States. There still are. That's why we have laws. That's why we have jails. But is it fair to smear the entire body of American citizens just because of a few lawbreakers?

Certainly there have been gangsters and criminals in the American Federation of Labor. Perhaps there still are. That's why we have laws and jails. If they are not all behind the bars now, we hope they soon will be. But is it fair to smear the entire 4,000,000 members of the American Federation of Labor just because of the misdeeds of a paltry, degraded few?

These remarks are occasioned by an editorial in the Washington Daily News of June 16 which quoted some of our statements in last week's column anent the Reds in the CIO and tried to turn the tables on us by making it seem that the American Federation of Labor suffers just as much from gangsters as the CIO from Communists.

Let's Clear the Air

This is just as good a time as any to clear the air on this subject. What are the facts?

First, it has been charged that the leadership of the American Federation of Labor is "crawling" with criminals. The fact is that during the past four years while we have been employed by the American Federation of Labor the number of union leaders in the American Federation of Labor who have been accused and convicted of crimes can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Secondly, it has been charged that the leadership of the American Federation of Labor has deliberately refrained from taking measures to clean out criminals in affiliated organizations. The fact is, however, that the leaders of the American Federation of Labor have done everything within their power to get rid of the tiny reprehensible racketeer element that infests a few unions.

But those who wish to confuse the issues, those who wish to smear and destroy the entire organized labor movement, are calling upon the American Federation of Labor to do things beyond its lawful, Constitutional powers.

They want the American Federation of Labor to act as Grand Jury, prosecutor and judge when these vital functions are lodged with the law enforcement and judicial agencies of the land.

They want the American Federation of Labor to usurp the functions and duties of the membership of affiliated unions who have sole power to elect and remove their union officials.

A Test of Democracy

These things the American Federation of Labor cannot do and retain its integrity and usefulness. It cannot employ detectives to spy on union leaders. It cannot subpoena records and investigate the books of affiliated unions. Nor can it vote out officials of affiliated unions and elect new ones in their places.

The American Federation of Labor can do this—it can call upon the law enforcement officials of our nation, states and cities to enforce the law without fear or favor and make justified punishment on union officials found to have betrayed their trust; it can call upon its affiliated national and international unions to clean house of racketeers.

These things the American Federation of Labor can do. And it has done them. Publicly and officially and fearlessly the American Federation of Labor has condemned union racketeering. It has called upon the law enforcement authorities to eradicate it. It has called upon all affiliated unions to prevent it.

Nor does the American Federation of Labor stop there. It appeals to every member of every affiliated union to do his or her duty in a democratic way to assure good government of unions.

One nation cannot have good government if the electorate becomes the tool of political machines and fails to exercise the power of the ballot intelligently for the election of honest, able leaders. Our unions cannot have good government unless the members vote fearlessly and intelligently for honest, able leaders.

The test that faces organized labor, as well as our nation, is whether we can make democracy work. That cannot be done if those in the ranks are so heedless of their own welfare as to fail to take advantage of the power of the ballot. We can make democracy work if the rank and file are willing to work for it.

Labor Has Never Shirked Its Duty And Will Aid Nation Now, Mead Says

Buffalo, N. Y.—"Labor has never shirked its responsibility in a great crisis, and it is not found wanting now, when the nation faces a tremendous job of defense against possible aggression!"

Senator James M. Mead made this declaration at the convention of the Switchmen, of which he is one of the most distinguished members, and he received a tremendous ovation.

"In this all-embracing program of defense," Mead said, "there will be no permanent blackout of labor's well-established gains. There will be further rewards to the workers for the sacrifices which are demanded.

"In this struggle between democracy and despotism we have been afforded to take half-way, half-hearted measures. We must accept our individual responsibilities in the spirit of true Americanism. But we will make it clear we are not permanently surrendering our hard-fought economic or social gains.

"Labor has made one contribution after another to our national security in the past. Labor will continue, in the future, to uphold, to enrich, to strengthen our American way of life. It will continue to shun the bigot, the demagogue, and the agitator. It will not tolerate the Communist, the Bundist or the Fascist.

"We will see to it, in keeping with our traditions, that work stoppages do not occur by reason of labor influence and that employers do not utilize the emergency to exact undue penalties from labor or to profiteer at the expense of the American people.

"We all know there have been temporary setbacks in the path of the organised railroad labor, but, on the whole, the causes of unionism have steadily fought, earnestly defended, and fairly won.

"No finer leadership is to be found than in the ranks which has been developed in our Standard Railroad Labor Unions. I know that my members of the Switchmen's Union will contribute unselfishly and unstintedly to your nation's defense efforts."

Greenwood Tells American Workers Hitler Victory Would Enslave Them

London, England.—Arthur Greenwood of the British Cabinet broadcast an appeal to workers in the United States, urging them to "play a full and active part in America's defense of democracy" and the defeat of Nazism.

Mr. Greenwood, Minister without portfolio in the Churchill Cabinet and Labor party leader, asked the American workers in a transatlantic radio broadcast to stand side-by-side with British labor to fight "for our common liberties, common hopes and for the future."

"My message to the workers of the United States is this: The British workers have blazed the trail for democratic working class organiza-

tions," he said. "We have, as result of ceaseless struggles for a century and a half, built up an organized labor movement which, because of its past sacrifices and achievements for our liberties, is dear to our workers, is determined to defend Britain.

"Organized labor in the United States is a newer growth. It has its own problems. But in the world situation, when a victory for Hitler means slavery for workers everywhere, the whole trade union movement of the States will be called to play its full and active part in America's defense of democracy while labor over here stands and fights for our common liberties, our common hopes and for the future."

ONE CONTRACT COVERS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES, Cal.—A comprehensive, collective bargaining labor agreement for highway engineering and building contractors of Southern California and twenty-one American Federation of Labor unions and all building and construction trades and district councils was signed following ten months of negotiation.

The agreement covers employes on all types of highway engineering and building construction in the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Inyo, Mono, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Imperial and Los Angeles, and is the first agreement of its type to be reached with the Associated General Contractors of America in Southern California labor history.

CIO Ranks Split On Red Issue; Murray Denies Reported Purge

Washington, D. C.—Revolt within CIO ranks against Communist leadership assumed such threatening proportions that impartial observers freely predicted the organization would be split wide open at its next convention.

President Phil Murray, after chastising Communist leadership in two local CIO unions, finally was forced to draw in his horns and send out a letter to CIO affiliates denying any intention of "purges" or "Red hunts."

The Washington Daily News column attributed Murray's sudden change of front to pressure from Harry Bridges and other Communist CIO chiefs.

Meanwhile, right-wingers and left-wingers in the CIO slugged it out verbally and in the public prints. One of the most significant developments came from John Green, head of the CIO Shipbuilding Workers Union, who was quoted in the New York Times as saying:

"The real saboteurs are the Communists hiding behind John L. Lewis's coat-tails."

The CIO Newspaper Guild was again in a turmoil of strife over the Communist issue. The New York Guild adopted resolutions endorsing President Roosevelt for sending troops to break the Communist strike at the North American Aviation Company in Los Angeles, but other local unions promptly condemned the New York group.

Milton Kaufman, executive Vice President of the Guild, was rebuked by Communist by the Dies Committee, was accused of encouraging "open possible action" by President R. J. Thomas of the CIO Auto Workers. That was because Kaufman indorsed the North American strike, which was conducted by a local union of the auto workers.

The Dies Committee also got busy and exposed two leaders of the CIO Diecasters Union, which had pulled a strike against the Cleveland plant of the Aluminum Company as Communists. Witnesses testified that one of the leaders named Balint was a member of the Communist Party and Edward T. Cheyfitz, another, had joined the party in 1935. Further testimony revealed that Paul Martin, president of the strike local, has been convicted six times on felony counts. Balint also admitted he served a sentence for auto theft in his youth.

Differences within the CIO were focused sharply in New York City. Louis Hollander, manager of the New York Joint board of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, called upon the CIO top leadership to oust "agents of the Moscow-Berlin axis" from positions of leadership in the organization. He also sent a telegram to President Roosevelt commending his labor policy.

On the other hand, the Greater New York Industrial Council, which is Communist-dominated, criticized the President for sending in troops to the North American Aviation strike front. Similar statements were made by Joseph Curran, President of the National Maritime Union and Michael J. Quill, President of the Transport Workers Union. Both are regarded as followers of the Communist Party line.

F.D.R. Hits CIO Raid on Teamsters; Tobin Lays Blame on Communists

Washington, D. C.—One of the shoddiest and cheapest CIO tricks in union history was sharply criticized by President Roosevelt, who authorized Secretary of Labor Perkins to say on his behalf that this is no time for the raiding of one union by another.

The President's denunciation was made in the action of Danny Lewis, little brother of Tom, in issuing a CIO charter to a local union of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters in Minneapolis, whose leaders were under charges of the Dies Committee.

Daniel J. Tobin, President of the Teamsters, protested the CIO action to the President. He declared the Teamsters had gone on record as supporting the national defense program 100 per cent and he attributed the CIO attempt to undermine the unions in Minneapolis to the machinations of enemies of American democracy.

Jimmy Lewis's action was criticized even in CIO ranks. Officials of the organization in Minnesota warned him that by antagonizing the powerful Teamsters Union, the strongest in the country, the CIO would invite "grave repercussions" in Minneapolis and elsewhere.

The alacrity of the CIO in grabbing A. F. of L. organizations ousted for radicalism was further emphasized in the case of the three local unions expelled by the American Federation of Teachers on charges that the New York City, officers of three Communist-dominated CIO unions—the National Maritime Union, the Transport Workers and the Office and Professional Workers—promised support to a meeting of the ousted teachers.

However, the American Federation of Teachers issued charters to new locals in New York City and Philadelphia to replace those ousted and immediately was swamped with applications for membership from thousands of teachers who said they were proud to join an organization courageous enough to expurgate branches diseased with Communism.

AFL Backs Defense Housing Program Minus Profiteers, Shishkin Declares

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor wholeheartedly favors a defense housing program free from the profiteer and the speculator, Boris Shishkin told the National Committee on the Housing Emergency at its meeting here.

Mr. Shishkin is the Secretary of the Housing Committee of the American Federation of Labor, said:

"The position of the housing is a double problem. When we plan and produce housing today we must plan and produce not only for the present needs and needs of all of the requirements of the immediate emergency. But we must remember today are laying up arms to defend the things for which they stand and the things for which they live. We know we are fighting the invader threatening our freedoms and our beliefs. America's shout is a peaceful shout, but it is echoed around the world. The gun is in the invader's hands is cocked, and the finger is on the trigger.

"It is the strength of our nation that we must build to the greatest. And the welfare of our people is the source of this strength.

"This is why the first three objectives of the defense housing program are speed, speed, and speed. We have no time for experiments, to debate, to disagree about details. We must get to set our schedules, knowing exactly what to build and where to build and get to work on these schedules. We must forget all of this job can be done quickly and effectively by local and national agencies of the government, public organizations with skill and knowledge qualifying them to do the job.

"Wherever private builders are ready, willing and able to put to work their resources and built housing to fill the need, they should be given full opportunity to do so. But all builders, public and private, have got to meet standards, standards of speed, of quality, of durability.

"The defense housing program also has no place for the profiteer and the speculator. Defense workers' earnings should not be drained into the pockets of the jerry-building, slum building profiteer.

"And let it be made clear once and for all that American labor will not accept a plan where, with public aid the speculative builder will be permitted to unload cheaply knocked together housing upon defense workers for ownership. The formula of Title VI of the National Housing Act which protects the public as well as banker and the risk of the builder and makes the worker assume the entire risk of emergency housing construction by inducing him to buy, is a formula which is unsound and must be unsound. It is a formula which can only serve to undermine the confidence of the average American family in home ownership.

"The second part of our problem is the future for we must build not only for today, but also for those critical days when the emergency is over. To meet that future crisis we should make our housing as sound and as lasting as we can. We should build as much durable, permanent housing as possible, and limit all flimsy, demountable housing solely to the communities which cannot possibly achieve permanence when the emergency is over.

"In all aspects of the defense housing program it is imperative that full consultation and adequate representation be afforded to those who speak for defense workers. There is no working partnership without working partnership. On local, state and national basis labor should be given a voice in the formulation of defense housing policy and on the basis of full recognition of the democratic process in the formulation of our policies and objectives can we carry out a defense housing program which will truly bear the label—the product of a democracy."

News Briefs

LUNDEBERG TESTIFIES BRIDGES IS COMMUNIST

San Francisco, Cal.—Harry Lundeberg, secretary treasurer of the A. F. of L. Sailors Union of the Pacific, testified at the Harry Bridges deportation hearing that Bridges and a Communist party official both told him Mr. Bridges was a Communist.

Lundeberg said he went to Bridge's office in 1936 and that Sam Darcy, then California State secretary for the Communist party. Mr. Darcy now is facing prosecution on charges of making false statements when he registered as a voter.

"Darcy asked me to join the Communist party," Lundeberg said. "Gave me a lot of soft soap and said if I would join the Communist party he would do me a lot of good, give me a lot of support. I said I was a trade union man and didn't see why I should join the Communist party. He said Bridges was a member of the Communist party."

AFL B/CKS SANTE FE ORGANIZING DRIVE

Chicago, Ill.—Full support of the A. F. of L. was pledged to the CIO backing thrown behind the drive of the shopcraft unions to organize the 14,000 shopmen on the Santa Fe Railroad.

President William Green of the A. F. of L. sent a letter to every General Labor Council in the area served by the shopcraft unions and to every organizer in the region, urging them to give all possible help.

"The American Federation of Labor is behind this organizing campaign," Green wrote. "I request that all organizers and officials in localities where Santa Fe shops are located cooperate with committees appointed by the shopcraft unions and render all possible assistance in the organizing work."

UTW GETS FIRST CONTRACT WITH BIG RAYON FIRM

Cleveland, O.—First labor union agreement ever signed by Industrial Rayon Corporation at any of its plants was announced here by the United Textile Workers' Local No. 2606 at the Painesville plant, Mrs. Carrie Hull, organizer, and Ruth Uffner, vice president, announced.

The contract, covering 950 employes most of whom are union members, provides preferential shop, increases from 5 to 10 cents per hour, one week's vacation with pay for all having one year or more service, 40-hour week, time and one-half for all time worked on holidays, seniority rights in case of plant bulletin boards, sole collective bargaining for group, safety and health provisions, 8-hour day, 40-hour week, and many other adjustments and improvements.

ILLINOIS HIGH COURT UPHOLDS PICKETING

Chicago, Ill.—Organized labor's right to conduct peaceful picketing was upheld by the Illinois State Supreme Court in a ruling that even such picketing was valid even though no direct employer-labor dispute was involved.

The opinion was on the appeal from a Cook County Superior Court order that enjoined the Milk Wagon Drivers' Union of Chicago (A. F. of L.) from picketing 87 stores supplied with milk by the Farmers Co-operative Milk Company. The union sought to organize the cooperative.

The court's ruling directed the lower court to modify its restraining order to allow the picketing to be peacefully, but would enjoin the union from "acts of intimidation or action as would amount to threats or attempts to intimidate."

The decision was in line with the recent opinion of the United States Supreme Court that upheld "stranger" picketing. The ruling serves to reverse previous State Supreme Court decisions that held that unions could not picket establishments in which there were no union members.

CHICAGO STREET CAR MEN WIN WAGE INCREASES

CHICAGO, Ill.—More than 18,500 employes of this city's surface transit lines overwhelmingly ratified a new contract providing for $2,500,000 annual wage raises when approved by the Amalgamated Association of Street Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employes of America.

The new agreement provides a five-cents an hour boost in wage rates, ten days vacation with pay and a $40 a month pension. It will run for one year. The Union officials hailed it as one of the greatest gains in years.

EIGHT MORE NAMED TO MEDIATION BOARD

Washington, D. C.—Appointment of eight more alternates to serve on the Defense Mediation Board has been approved by President Roosevelt.

The group includes two representatives of industry, three A. F. of L. and three from officials of the CIO. They will serve on Mediation Board panels in the absence of regular members.

The representatives of employers: George H. Mead, president of the Mead Corp., Dayton, Ohio, and Rolland J.

Smashing AFL Victory Predicted In International Harvester Elections

Membership Gains Soar in Six Plants Covered By NLRB Poll June 18

Chicago, Ill.—All signs point to a smashing American Federation of Labor victory in the National Labor Relations Board elections to be held June 18 at the six plants of the International Harvester Company.

Membership in the six A. F. of L. Federal labor unions at these plants has gained by leaps and bounds in the past month, Harry E. O'Reilly, regional organization director for this district, disclosed.

All affiliated unions of the American Federation of Labor are pitching in to help the International Harvester organization drive and the workers have been deeply impressed by their strength and solidarity and support.

O'Reilly declared that the wildest strike called at the McCormick plant by the CIO with only a handful of members has taught the workers the folly of joining an irresponsible union influenced by Communist leaders.

The elections will be held simultaneously at the McCormick, West Pullman, East Moline, Farmall, Milwaukee and Rock Falls plants of the company. All hourly wage employes will be allowed to vote without loss of pay.

In a message to the Harvester workers, President William Green of the American Federation of Labor, said:

"The whole labor movement looks to the employes of International Harvester to register a decisive vote in favor of unionism that can advance interests and protect your rights.

"Your vote on June 18 will determine whether you workers will control your own unions and decide what cause you will support in our nation's crisis, or whether you will turn your unions and your future over to those who are trying to turn the American labor movement into a Communist tool to destroy our democratic institutions and leave us helpless before the dictators—Communist and Nazi.

"This is one of the few countries in which workers still have the right to strike. But if we allow leaders to rush us into strikes merely to gain an organization advantage, we follow a course that will surely end in repressive legislation.

"The C. I. O. called a strike in your McCormick plant when it had only a handful of followers. Why? Not to get anything for you but, to gain a technical point by 'conferring' with your employers in order to claim recognition as representing the workers in collective bargaining. You saw the trick. You were loyal members of the A. F. of L. You were in the majority. You had no dispute with your employer and you rightly followed A. F. of L. leaders to work. I commend you for your courage in this action.

"The A. F. of L. next secured for you from the National Labor Relations Board the right to hold a free election to determine whether you will have an American union as your bargaining agency or whether you will be swept into a union bearing the notorious legend C. I. O. Let me give you a solemn warning now that there is every reason to believe that C. I. O. is in connection with Communist Party. The material paradise which is the promise cannot be brought about. It only brings the tyranny that is the purpose.

"Let me urge that you make next June 18 the date of your victory and to union membership. These basic rights are yours to use. Use them wisely and you will make gains through collective bargaining. Use them as a basis for further demands and you will find yourselves tied by compulsory legislation and without freedom.

"Use restraint in this time of national danger and you will protect your rights, and you will be the best interests of our Republic.

"Reckless and irresponsible people offer to lead you along a course that would destroy what has been secured by wage-earners over 60 years of struggle. That course will not only lead you to sore progress in possession of your rights but will also not fit upon you the blame for destroying the rights and opportunities of all other workers.

"The A. F. of L. as your initial step for better work relations and higher wages and to assure continued freedom to protect your own interests."

UNION LABEL DRIVE IN NATION'S CAPITAL

Washington, D. C.—The Washington Union Label League, chartered by the A. F. of L. at the request of the president of the American Federation of Labor in 1920, which represents 175 labor and industrial unions and has a membership of 130,000 members, is conducting an intensive summer campaign in the nation's capital in the interest of union label products and union services of all kinds.

According to Frank S. Lerch, president, the campaign will embrace contacts with union members and their families (estimated to constitute about half the total population of Washington) urging them to always demand union products and services; and with merchants, who will be asked to carry ample stocks of union products, and to give preference to union services in all lines, including the building trades.

Hamilton, president, American Radiator Co., New York.

Employe representatives: Herbert Woods, director of research, International Union of Operating Engineers (A. F. of L.), Washington; John Brophy, CIO; Hugh Lyons, CIO; Edward J. Brown, president, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers of America, A. F. L; George Lynch, president, Pattern Makers League of North America, A. F. L., and Abner B. Carey, secretary of the CIO.